India for new alliances with ASEAN and other countries

495. DR. VIJAY MALLYA:
SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA:
Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of the failure of the WTO Minsiterial Conference at Cancun and the threat issued by the US of bypassing WTO for bilateral trading arrangements, Government are contemplating to forge new alliances with ASEAN and other countries such as China, South Korea, Japan etc.;

(b) if so, whether any bilateral alliances are being worked out; and

(c) the details of steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) India's engagements for bilateral alliances are consistent with our trading interests and is an on going process of our trade policy, started much before the Cancun Conference.The failure or otherwise of WTO Ministerial Conference does not shape our attitude to bilateral alliances.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Transit business facility through Bangladesh

496. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are planning for providing transit business facility through Bangladesh and whether Bangladesh Government have been contacted on this issue;

(b) if so, the progress made so for; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) to (c) In terms of Article VIII of the Trade Agreement between India and Bangladesh, the two Governments have agreed to make mutually beneficial arrangements for the use of their waterways, railways and roadways for commerce

between the two countries and for passage of goods between the two places in one country through the territory of the other.

During the 5th meeting of India-Bangladesh Joint Economic Commission held in March 1997, it was decided to set up a Group of Experts to examine and make recommendations on the issue of border trade. Two other issues namely trans-shipment of goods from one point in India to another through Bangladesh territory in pursuance of Article VIII of the bilateral Trade Agreement and deepening of tariff concessions were also assigned to this Group at the meeting of the two Commerce Ministers in 1999.

During subsequent bilateral discussions, however, Bangladesh side did not agree to discuss trans-shipment.

Rejection of Tea consignments by Germany

497. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some German buyers have started rejecting the tea consignments on the ground that these do not meet the stringent EU pesticide norm on the presence of ethion;

(b) whether it is a fact that the German buyers have alleged that the ethion content in the tea far exceeds the acceptable limit as specified in the EU pesticide norms; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to reduce the ethion content in the tea consignments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) No specific case of rejection of Indian tea consignment by the German buyers has come to the notice of the Government.

(b) No specific complaint has been received by the Government in this regard.

(c) The latest EU/German Commission residue limits on tea as on 16.12.02 indicated maximum permissible level for ethion in tea to be 3 parts per million (ppm).This stipulation is considered to be stringent as